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UNITY OR PLURALITY OF HUMANKIND?

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Near the beginning of the nineteenth century, in 1801, M. de Virey declared his opinion that mankind was composed of two species, the white and the black, each divided into six races, and these, in their turn, into families. This opinion did not meet with much acceptance, and since then various other classifications of human races have been suggested, that enforced by Dr. Paul Topinard, in his "Éléments d'Anthropologie Générale," being perhaps the most generally received. This division into three typical stocks, the black, the yellow and the white, had already been proposed by M. de Quatrefages, whose classification of races, however, failed, as pointed out by Dr. Topinard, in several important particulars, especially in relation to the blacks of India and Australia, and in the positions assigned to the Japanese and the Polynesians. M. G. Sergi, in his work on "The Mediterranean Race," first published in 1895, gives strong reasons for introducing a fourth type, that of the brown or Mediterranean race, but it is not necessary to discuss this point in the present article.†

Within the last few years, M. de Virey's idea of there being two fundamental types of man, the white and the black, has been revived. The ground for this has been recently stated by Dr. G. A. Dorsey,‡ as follows: "There are two great races, the

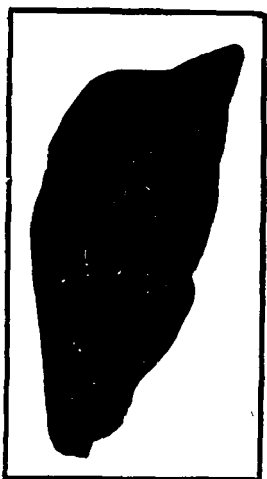
*A notice of the death of Mr C. Staniland Wake has reached the editor of this journal. It has awakened many memories of the past. Mr. Wake was known to a large number of the archaeologists of Great Britain, and his articles have been appreciated by the readers of the *American Antiquarian* through many years.

† A critical notice of M. Sergi's work, by the present writer, will be found in *The American Antiquarian* for 1900.

‡ See *The Chicago Daily Tribune* for Nov. 16, 1909.

THE STORY OF THE DELUGE

PROFESSOR HILPRECHT'S REMARKABLE DISCOVERY



Edge View of the Nippur Version of the Deluge.

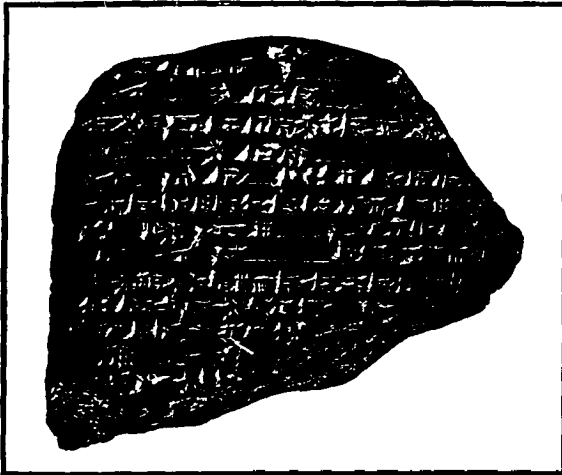
One of the most remarkable discoveries which has ever been made in Assyriology, a discovery which redounds greatly to the credit of the University of Pennsylvania, and to the credit of Prof. H. C. Hilprecht, is the finding of an account of the Babylonian Deluge which antedates any Deluge narrative extant. The significance of the discovery is enhanced by the fact that in the most important details it agrees remarkably with the Biblical version of the Deluge, much more so, in fact, than any other cuneiform version thus far unearthed.

The work of Professor Hilprecht is of fundamental importance for the correct determination of the age of Israel's earliest traditions; for the Nippur tablet, upon which the story is written, was inscribed before Abraham had left his home in Ur of the Chaldees.

Upon Professor Hilprecht's recommendation that his discoveries be made accessible to the scientific world as quickly as possible, a paper by him has recently been published by the University of Pennsylvania, which bears the title, "The Babylonian Expedition of the University of Pennsylvania. Series D: Researches and Treatises. Vol. V. Fasciculus." From this paper the following abstract is made:

Toward the end of October, 1909, while unpacking and examining two boxes of cuneiform tablets from the fourth expedition of the University of Pennsylvania to Nippur, Professor Hilprecht's attention was attracted by some fragments which presented certain peculiarities, and which, unlike the others in the boxes, were not written in Sumerian, the ancient sacred language of Babylonia, but in the Semitic dialect of the country. This fragment was so completely covered with crystals of niter and other sediments that, when taken out from its paper wrapper

at first only a few cuneiform signs could be recognized. Three characters in particular, standing together in the upper section of the fragment, were fortunately free from incrustations. The words were *a-bu-bi*, "deluge." Professor Hilprecht's attention was naturally aroused. For three continuous weeks he personally spent from one to two hours every day endeavoring to uncover one cuneiform character after another by removing the incrustations and other deposits of hardened dirt without damaging the writing below, until he had completely deciphered every sign. The fragment proved to be a somewhat incomplete but unmistakable account of the Deluge about fifteen hundred years older



Front View of the Nippur Version of the Deluge.
Date, approximately, 2100 B. C.

than similar fragments obtained from the library of Ashurbanapal (668-626 B.C.), and was inscribed more than six hundred years before the time generally assigned to Moses, and even before the Patriarch Abraham rescued Lot from the hands of Amraphel of Shinar and Chedorlaomer of Elam (Genesis 14). Furthermore, in its preserved portion it showed a much greater resemblance to the Biblical Deluge story than any other fragment yet published.

The cuneiform text of the fragment contains a portion of the divine command to the Babylonian Noah, Ut-na-pishtim, to construct a ship and to save life from the all-destroying flood. Apart from the tradition of a great flood handed down by the

Babylonian priest, Berosus (living between 330 and 250 B.C.), but preserved only in extracts by other ancient writers, there are fragments of three distinct Deluge versions in cuneiform writing.

The first of these is the version from the library of King Ashurbanapal (668-626 B.C.), which was restored from a number of fragments found in the ruins of Nineveh, and which is an Assyrian copy of a Babylonian original.

The second is a somewhat different version of the Babylonian Deluge story and is found on Fragment "D(aily) T(elegraph) 42," which likewise came from the royal library of Nineveh and was inscribed about the same time (c. 650 B.C.).

The third fragment is that acquired and published by Professor Scheil of Paris, and now in the possession of Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan. It is dated "in the year when King Ammi-zaduga built Dur-Ammi-zaduga at the mouth of the Euphrates," *i.e.*, the eleventh year of his government; in other words, according to Professor Hilprecht's reduced chronology, about 1868 B.C.

An examination of the cuneiform text of the Nippur fragment and a comparison of this new version of the Babylonian Deluge story with the parallel passages of the two Nineveh versions and the biblical story have brought out the significant fact that, with all due allowance for a general resemblance between the three cuneiform versions, the Nippur version of the divine announcement of a great flood and the command to build the ark differs fundamentally from the two Nineveh versions, and agrees most remarkably with the biblical story. This agreement affects that part of the Pentateuch (Genesis 6:13-20; 8:11) which Old Testament critics style P. (=Priestly Code) and generally regard as having been "compiled in Babylonia about 500 B.C." The importance of this new text to theological students cannot be overrated. Written as it was about 2100 B.C., this new version came into being at a time when the sanctuary of Enlil at Nippur was supreme among the Babylonian temples and was the centre of literature. When Hammurabi, the Amraphel of Genesis 14, conquered Rim-Sin of Larsa, the various petty Babylonian states constituting, geographically, the ancient kingdom of Shumer and Akkad were united politically by the conqueror. Babylon on the Euphrates became the metropolis of the united empire. After Ammi-ditana, the third successor of Hammurabi, Nippur disappears rapidly from history. It reappears with the rise of the Cassite dynasty in Babylonia,

about 1400 B.C., and its sanctuary again rises to hold a conspicuous place for several centuries. The revival is but the last flicker of a fast dying flame.

In Professor Hilprecht's opinion the Temple Library at Nippur was a most insignificant institution after 1000 B.C., and it flourished most gloriously before 2000 B.C. The priests of the Cassite and Neo-Babylonian periods produced few, if any, original literary compositions of value at Nippur, more delighting in the statement at the end of their tablets that the text was "a faithful copy of an old Nippur original." The literary activity of the priests was transferred to other centres, like Babylon and Sippar. It is therefore evident that the Nippur fragments, antedating the two Nineveh versions by fifteen hundred years, represent the oldest version of the Babylonian Deluge story in a Semitic translation made, doubtless, from a much older Sumerian original which has not yet been discovered, and that the later cuneiform versions are different editions of the same story with considerable changes, abbreviations and additions. The Deluge story of the so-called "Priestly Code" must form part of the oldest traditions of Israel, as Old Testament scholars have pointed out.

Even the Amarna period (about 1400 B.C.) with its unsettled conditions in Palestine, when the influence of Babylonia upon the shaping of the government and the religious conceptions of Palestine was almost *nil*, cannot explain its presence in the Old Testament. The only period when the oldest version of the Deluge story could possibly have entered Canaan was the time when Abraham, whom Professor Hilprecht regards as an historical personage, left his home on the Euphrates and journeyed westward; in other words, the period of the first dynasties of Isin and Babylon, of which Hammurabi or Amraphel is the central figure, the time when the Amorites knocked at the gates of Babylonia, invaded the country, and soon overthrew the old dominion.

Although the interpretation of the Nippur tablet is by no means easy, it can be stated with safety that in accordance with the exalted position held by Enlil in the old Babylonian pantheon as "father of the gods," it was in all probability Enlil himself who warned Ut-na-pishtin to take refuge in an ark. Here, then, as in the biblical version, the Lord of the Universe himself, both causes the Deluge and saves Noah from destruction by warning him and ordering the construction of an ark.

We present herewith in parallel columns the translation of the actual preserved portions of the ancient Nippur version and the corresponding passages of the Old Testament according to the Hebrew text. The similarity is at once striking, so much so, in fact, that the blanks in the Nippur version can easily be supplied by the more complete account:

| Line | Nippur Version | Biblical Version |
|------|---|--|
| 2 | "I will loosen." | (Genesis 6 13-20 : 7 ^a 11.) |
| 3 | "it shall sweep (or 'take') away all men together;" | 7-11 "all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened." |
| 4 | "life (?) before the deluge cometh forth." | 6, 11. "behold, I will destroy them with the earth" |
| 5 | (over) "as many as there are, I will bring overthrow, destruction, annihilation." | 18: "but with thee I will establish my covenant" |
| 6 | "build a great ship and" | 17: "and behold I do bring the deluge upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven, everything that is on earth shall perish." |
| 7 | "total height shall be its structure," | 14: "make thee an ark. . ." |
| 8 | "it shall be a house-boat carrying what has been saved of like." | 15: "and thus thou shalt make it . . . and thirty cubits its height." |
| 9 | "with a strong roof over it " | 16 "A roof shalt thou make to the ark, in its (entire) length thou shalt cover it; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; (with) lower, second and third stories shalt thou make it " |
| 10 | (the boat) "which thou shalt make," | 19 "And from every living thing, from all flesh, two from everything shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female." |
| 11 | "instead of a number" | 20: "(two) from the birds instead of a number thereof; (two) from the beasts instead of a number thereof; (two) from everything creeping on the ground instead of a number thereof;" |
| 12 | "and family" | 18, b "and thou shalt come into the ark, thou and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons wives with thee " |

—*Scientific American.*